



This manual is a project of the Israel Resource News Agency. Through comprehensive training the program gives survivors and families of victims of terror attacks the tools to effectively argue Israel's case in the media and help to delegitimize the terror organizations that beset Israel and the world.

Since the signing of the Oslo accords, thousands of Jews have become casualties. However, the statistics do not convey a sense of how many people, uninjured in body, have become victims of Arab terrorism through the loss of loved ones and emotional trauma suffered through witnessing violent acts.

The idea behind this program is that victims of terror become empowered when they are given the tools to defend Israel in the media. This is aside from the fact that terror victims are in a unique position to deal with the media as objects of human-interest.

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*The Israel Resource News Agency has one purpose: to report Israel's reality to the media by retaining the services of the best Israeli and Arab journalists to cover, research and investigate the events of the day.*

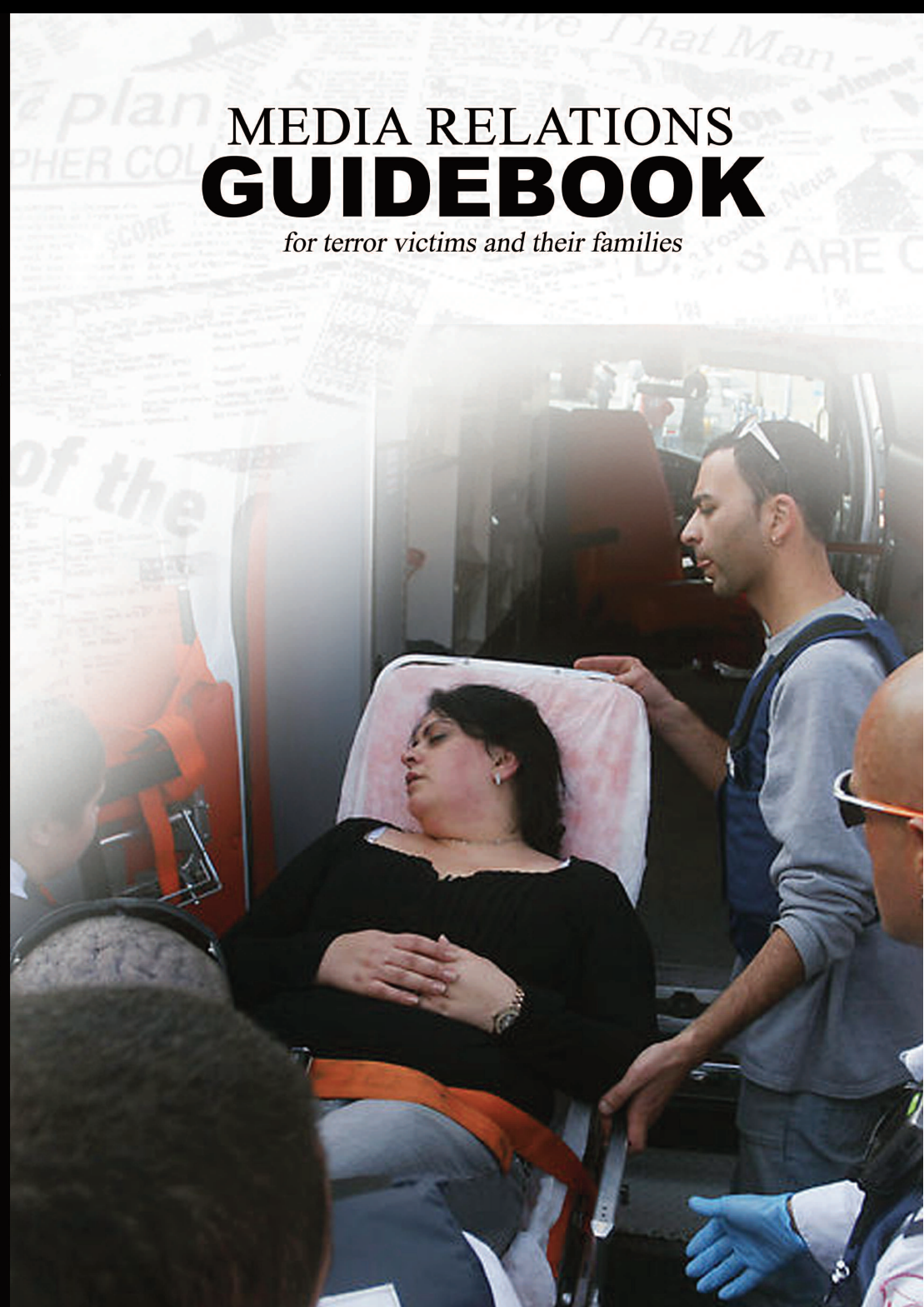
*Since its inception in 1987, Israel Resource News Agency has covered every aspect of peace negotiations, providing hands-on coverage for the press from Jerusalem, Ramallah, Gaza, Gush Etzion, Hebron, Oslo, Bonn, Brussels, the Wye Plantation, Shepherdstown, Washington, Ottawa, Toronto and Vienna.*



# MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDEBOOK

*for terror victims and their families*

Israel Resource News Agency MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDEBOOK



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## MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDEBOOK

compiled by the Israel Resource News Agency



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## About the Program

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Thousands of people in Israel have become casualties of Arab terror attacks. Statistics do not convey a sense of how many people continue to suffer as victims of Arab terror, whether through the loss of a loved one or through the trauma of experiencing or witnessing a violent act of terror.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will empower terror victims to defend Israel in the public domain, recognizing that terror victims are in a unique position to relate to the media, as a subject of intense human interest.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will provide comprehensive media orientation and professional guidance to help terror attack survivors and the families of terror victims effectively argue Israel's case, so as to challenge the legitimacy of terror organizations that beset Israel and the world.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will help terror victims to understand the way in which news organizations and media professionals operate in order to have a working knowledge of the people and systems with which you will be interacting. Spending some time doing research into various organizations that report the news from Israel and understanding their different approaches to the conflict is an important first step before trying to interact with reporters. Newswriters often like to interview "minor" participants in larger events in order to get otherwise unobtainable information. Telling a reporter that you have information that complements or supplements his story will often assure access to that reporter.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will help terror victims to accompany the media representative throughout the activity, guiding the victim to offering explanations and to provide succinct answers to questions that are often asked.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will give renewed purpose and hope to those who have lost so much.

As a matter of course, Arab media professionals parade their victims - and even their dead bodies - in front of the world's cameras, as one of the most effective tools that they use. Indeed, Arabs have manipulated the world into thinking that they hold a monopoly on "suffering". This represents an intolerable situation to those Israeli victims of terror.

The contrast speaks for itself: Arab civilian victims are the unintended casualties of the Arab Israeli war, while civilian victims represent the precise targets of the genocidal terror groups poised to kill and maim Jews.

By helping victims of Arab terror to speak for themselves, The Terror Vic-

tim Media Training Program will undercut a significant advantage held by Israel's adversaries.

Recognizing that terror victims are often highly motivated and patriotic people who would dearly love a chance to fight back against the enemies who have left a permanent scar on their lives.

The task, therefore, of The Terror Victim Media Training Program is to enable Israel's bereaved community to advocate for Israel.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will become the first effort to equip victims of terror with the tools that they will need to defend the state of Israel in a war that is no less real than the war waged on the battlefield.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program emanates from forty years of hands-on experience accumulated by community organization social worker and journalist Davd Bedein, head of Israel Resource News Agency and the Center for Near East Policy Research. Israel Resource News Agency has one purpose: to report Israel's human reality to the media by retaining the services of top Israeli and Arab journalists reporters to cover the human drama of events of the day.

Since its inception in 1987, Israel Resource News Agency has reported every aspect of peace negotiations, providing hands-on coverage from Jerusalem, Ramallah, Gaza, UNRWA refugee camps, Gush Etzion, Hebron, Oslo, Bonn, Brussels, the Wye Plantation, Shepherdstown, Washington, Ottawa, Toronto, Geneva, Vienna. Center for Near East Policy Research, pioneered in 1986, likewise has one purpose: to provide documented academic research to the press and to the public, so as to place the Middle East conflict in the context of well researched documentation of the issues behind the events of the day.

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# Preface

David Bedein

In order to make use of the media in furthering your goals and in getting your message across, it is necessary to have a basic knowledge of how media outlets gather and process the news.

Moreover, you must have a strategy for dealing with reporters and their most common questions. You must be prepared to react to various techniques employed by correspondents when conducting interviews and you must have a good working knowledge of the history and politics of the Arab war on Israel.

To be an effective representative of Israel, study and practice are required. Most mainstream *hasbara* programs approach Israel advocacy from a theoretical and idealistic viewpoint. The Israel Resource News Agency's media relations course, on the other hand, starts with a realistic inside look of the way mainstream news outlets work, and tailors its content to fit existing realities.

Utilizing decades of cumulative experience in reporting, we have compiled a list of guidelines for dealing with media personnel. Unlike some organizations, which assume an inbuilt bias against Israel, the IRNA realizes that foreign correspondents are frequently uninformed regarding the conflict and its history and frequently do not have time to learn a significant amount before being sent to cover another region.

On top of this, the Arabs have perfected the art of the sound bite and are masters at staying on message. While in Israel there are multiple agencies each issuing contradictory statements on any given event, usually downplaying Jewish rights and focusing on lengthy and boring explanations and arguments regarding security, the Arabs focus on only one thing: the so called "occupation."

Learning to stay on message, to be brief and to be persistent in arguing for ones rights are crucial in the battle for public opinion. In this book, you will learn how to do these things as well as tips and tricks for staying cool and leading conversations where you wish them to go when standing up to represent your nation in the international media.

With best wishes for success,



David Bedein,  
IRNA Bureau Chief

# Why the Palestinians are Winning the Media War

An Abridged Interview with David Bedein in Reform Judaism Magazine Fall 2002

**Q: Do you agree with those who say that "the Palestinians have been doing a better job than the Israelis on the public relations front"?**

BEDEIN: Yes...

Palestinian media professionals have no qualms about deceiving the media for political advantage. In their attempt to convince the world that the IDF massacred hundreds of civilians in the Jenin refugee camp during Operation Defensive Shield, they used animal carcasses to fill the air with the stench of rotting flesh in places where reporters and UN officials were likely to visit. The IDF caught that ploy on video, as they did a staged funeral in which "the body" jumped out of the coffin and ran for cover when an Israeli surveillance plane flew over the site.

**Q: How have the Israelis countered this Palestinian strategy of portraying them as human rights violators?**

BEDEIN: The Israelis constantly find themselves on the defensive. They can't seem to get out of the box into which the Palestinians have put them. By framing the conflict as a human rights issue, the Palestinians have succeeded in convincing many journalists, on some level at least, that every act of terrorism against Israeli civilians is not a crime, but a legitimate response to human rights abuses.

**Q: What is the organizational structure of the Palestinian public relations program, and how does it differ from Israel's?**

BEDEIN: The Israeli government provides the visiting press with bushels of bulletins, but leaves the provision of camera crews and translation services to the private sector. No Israeli TV crew can compete with the heavily subsidized JMCC, which essentially has cornered the market on media services for the foreign press. The foreign press is totally dependent on Palestinian technical support personnel, who have a strong influence on the narrative and images that appear in the Western media.

**"Professionally trained and disciplined Palestinian spokespeople usually present themselves as a ragtag bunch of amateurs."**

**Q: How do the Palestinians and Israelis differ in their methods of media relations?**

BEDEIN: Professionally trained and disciplined Palestinian spokespeople usually present themselves as a ragtag bunch of amateurs. They meet Western reporters in modest Jerusalem or Ramallah hotels or against the backdrop of refugee camps. This tactic has been very successful in reinforcing the stereotype of their side as the aggrieved underdog. An interview with a Palestinian in an alleyway with burning tires and bullets flying overhead captures the imagination of editors who place a premium on entertainment value--the human drama unfolding.

In contrast, when foreign correspondents meet with Israeli officials, they are often greeted by slick government spokespeople at fancy hotels, state-of-the-art media centers, or modern offices. Israeli spokespeople labor under three false notions: first, that formal, professionally packaged P.R. is persuasive; second, that lengthy explanations of the history of the conflict will be more effective than sound bytes in convincing the public of the rightness of their cause; and third, that the moral correctness of their action and cause is self-evident to any rational, fair-minded human being. Along these lines, Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres once said: "Good policies are good P.R.; they speak for themselves." Unfortunately, Peres was wrong. A lie can be more powerful than the truth, if you market your lie well enough for people to believe it.

**"Israeli spokespeople labor under three false notions: first, that formal, professionally packaged P.R. is persuasive..."**

Another problem with Israeli P.R. is that it is woefully uncoordinated and sometimes contradictory. News originates from at least four different offices--the IDF, the Foreign Ministry, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, and the Defense Ministry--and at times each conveys a different mes-

sage.

In contrast to the seemingly uncoordinated messages coming from Israel, spokespeople of the autocratic Palestinian Authority adhere to a party line with practiced discipline, simply reciting the standard litany of complaints about their "oppression," the "occupation," "human rights abuses," "racism," etc.

**Q: How do the Palestinians and Israelis compare in their treatment of foreign journalists?**

BEDEIN: The Israeli army often declares areas to be off limits to the media, which is like flashing a red flag before a bull. The first thing a reporter assumes is that Israel is trying to hide something. One foreign reporter, who wishes to remain anonymous, told me that Israel had made a "horrible mistake" when "the IDF closed the whole West Bank to reporters during Operation Defensive Shield and left the area wide open to wild rumors planted skillfully by Palestinian spokesmen. We had no way to check out the rumors, and so many of us had to report it in a he-said, she-said format. And, of course, when TV networks put Palestinian spokesmen on live to make their charges, then it's out there and we have to deal with it."

In contrast, the PA rarely engages in confrontation with the foreign press. A rare exception occurred in October 2002 when two IDF soldiers were lynched in the Ramallah police station. The gruesome scene was captured by an Italian TV crew and sent abroad without going through PA censors. The PA demanded an apology and a promise never to do it again--or lose permission to cover Palestinian territory. The Italians said mea culpa and promised never again to embarrass their hosts. We asked our staffer to fly to Rome to interview this Italian crew, who told us, on the record, how they had been browbeaten by PA security officials into providing a letter of apology.

**Q: What advice would you give the Israeli government to improve its image in the**

**Western media?**

BEDEIN: ...I think the best way for Israel to improve its public relations is to improve its human relations. On the positive side, Israel has finally begun to provide correspondents with more concise and useful background information, such as kits, CD ROMs, and profiles of Israel's enemies.

But rather than providing reporters with the means to get to the scene of an attack, Israel still prefers to keep them away. In short, Israel needs to treat journalists with less suspicion and more respect.

**Q: Do you believe that many Western journalists harbor an anti-Israel bias, or are there other factors which work in favor of the Palestinian point of view?**

BEDEIN: ...Most foreign journalists are not inherently anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, or pro-Palestinian. They are, however, easily swayed by Palestinian manipulation, which relies on the reporters' and editors' lack of background knowledge, combined with the lack of time and desire to take a deep look at the facts. Another factor is the fear of losing access to Palestinian sources and logistical support if their stories are perceived as hostile. Moreover, non-Palestinian reporters are deliberately impeded and intimidated when trying to cover news that may embarrass the PA. I know of several foreign journalists who had reported incidents of Palestinian incitement and were thereafter barred from PA briefings.

**Q: In the final analysis, how important is the P.R. factor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**

BEDEIN: Absolutely crucial. So long as Western journalists project an image of the PA as a defender of human rights and Israel as a brutal occupier, development funds from the United States and the European Union will continue to flow into the PA's coffers with little public protest about some of that money being used to bankroll the intifada, including suicide bombers, as documents seized from Arafat's office during Operation Defensive Shield prove. So long as Palestinian P.R. professionals continue to dictate the story line to the media, Israelis will continue to be portrayed as the villains and the Palestinians the victims. It's time to change the script.

**"So long as Palestinian P.R. professionals continue to dictate the story line to the media, Israelis will continue to be portrayed as the villains and the Palestinians the victims. It's time to change the script."**



## **Terror Victim Media Training Program: Media Effectiveness Training**

In order to make use of the media, it is necessary for the terror victim to gain a basic knowledge of how media outlets gather and process the news.

The terror victim must have a strategy for dealing with reporters and their concerns.

The terror victim must be prepared to react to techniques used by reporters when conducting interviews.

The terror victim must acquire a working knowledge of the Arab war on Israel.

To effectively present Israel's case, study and practice are required.

The Israel Resource News Agency's media relations approach starts with a realistic look at the way in which mainstream news outlets work, while compiling a list of guidelines for dealing with media personnel.

Foreign and even Israeli correspondents are frequently uninformed regarding the conflict and its history and frequently do not have time to learn a significant amount before covering news stories.

On top of this, Arab media relations specialists and their Jewish allies have perfected the art of the manipulative sound byte and are masters at staying on message.

In Israel there are multiple sources that issue contradictory statements on any given event, which one of the characterizations of a vibrant democracy, while Arabs repeat the same simple mantras, over and over, such as "Stop The Occupation."

Learning to stay on the message, the terror victim must learn how to be brief and persistent in arguing the justice of your case is the crucial skill to learning the battle for public opinion.

The Terror Victim Media Training Program will help the terror victim to articulate this approach and stay cool under pressure, while representing the human face of Israel to the media.

How can you sponsor the Terror Victim Media Training Program:

**Center for Near East Policy Research, P.O. Box 1783 Brookline, MASS  
02446-0014 USA**

**or make a direct bank transfer:**

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